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ABSTRACT

Issues in the Japanese educational system are addressed in this book, with a focus on discipline and student rights. Based on the experiences of an American who taught at a Japanese university for 2 years, the book discusses pervasive problems within the system of lower level colleges. Following a description of university experiences, the second chapter explores some of the attitudes toward education that facilitate a race between the economic superpowers. Chapter 3 describes the conflict between social norms and personal goals, and chapter 4 describes some of the changing characteristics of Japanese society and their impact on the educational system. The next three chapters examine discipline issues, such as corporal punishment, teachers' use of verbal abuse and intimidation, and the reaction against physical punishment. The dark side of student life is presented in the next three chapters, including suicide, depression, examination pressure, student violence, and the public response to violence. Chapter 11 debunks the myth of Japan as a harmonious society, and chapter 12 traces the historical roots of group responsibility and the impact of the five-family system on social control. Political responses are discussed in the 13th chapter, and alternatives that have been implemented partly in response to widespread disillusionment with traditional schools are described in the final chapter. Twenty references are listed for suggested reading. (LMI)

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